

Freer House, New Paltz,  
Ulster County,  
New York.

HABS No. 4-303 HABS  
N.Y.  
✓ 56-NEWP  
5-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

District No. 4  
Southern New York State

Historic American Buildings Survey  
Wm. Dewey Foster, District Officer,  
25 West 45th Street, New York City.

HAB  
N.Y.  
56 NEW  
5-

## THE FREER HOUSE

Hugenot Street, New Paltz, New York.  
(Ulster County)

### Historical Introduction

The Freer House is a one and one-half story house of stone, with a frame lean-to at the rear. It was built in 1720. In LeFever's History of New Paltz, a tax list of the early free-holders of New Paltz is given, in which the names of Hugo Freer Sr., and Hugo Freer Jr., are listed. Other information states that Johannes Louw married Rebecca, daughter of Hugo Freer Sr., and lived in the most northern house on Hugenot Street. This information tallies with the house known today as the Freer House.

There is a wood marker on the southwest corner of the front wall with two names: "Freer House, 1720 -- Louw House, 1732."

In an issue called Art Work of Ulster County, part 9, published by the W. H. Parish Publishing Co., 1893, there is a fine half-tone picture of the north end and front of this house showing a picket fence and a vine-covered porch.

The house is owned today by Miss Margaret Jamison, Arbuckle Farms, New Paltz, New York.

### Architectural Description

The Freer House has an unusual exterior, showing two examples of gable-end finishes. The north gable has clapboard from plate to peak, while the south end shows the stone carried to the head of the gable windows, and clapboard from that point to the peak.

On the south end an interesting detail is to be seen in the old granary door, which has been filled in with a frame and sash, with clapboard under it to the floor. The old door frame can be clearly seen on the inside of the attic.

The front porch is of later date than the rest of the house and has been modified, as the photographs show. One of the pictures shows the log gutter used in the early days on this type of house.

The verge boards have been sadly repaired, destroying the eaves at the eaves which were usually shaped to cover and protect the end of the plate.

The two rear kitchen chimneys indicate the changes made in the house in dividing it to accomodate two families.

The window in the rear cellar wall is evidence that the lean-to was built later. Other evidence is the old stone areaway that leads to the cellar from Room "C" near door 2. This door opened to the outside or to a summer kitchen occupying the space of Room "C", and covered by a lean-to roof. Cellar opening number 1 at the foot of this areaway has an original batten door with a log frame and hardware as shown.

In the north end of the main house, rooms "A" and "B" were one room. The old fireplace and chimney have been removed down to the cellar floor. Modern tongue and grooved boards of narrow widths have been placed over the openings. It is possible that the north end of the house was built first, and consisted of this one main room.

In the corner of room "B" where noted on the plan, there is evidence of a steep stair having been formerly against the wall. The line of the string of this stair shows distinctly on the plaster wall, and the stair well shows clearly on both the first and attic floors, where the space of the well has been covered over with narrow boards. Directly over, are the attic bedrooms with wide board partitions and white-washed ceilings. This end of the house would make a complete living unit and may have been built first.

The center stone cross wall evidently went through from front to rear. There is a break in the front wall in the attic, and an open joint in the plate at this point. The different construction in the north and south gables would indicate that the south end had been built later.

There is a heavy chimney foundation in the south end of the house, and there is narrow boarding over the space where the hearth would have been. When this chimney was removed, a portion of the cross wall was torn down and replaced with frame. This is considerably thicker than the other frame parts of the house. The stair and closet is built over the space formerly occupied by the chimney.

The small brick stack on the south wall was built much later, and runs only to the first floor, where it is supported in a manner similar to the chimney on the north end of the house.

Throughout the house there are fine examples of the wide hand-planed board floors  $1\frac{1}{2}$ " thick. In the attic these boards are of long lengths, some being 12' 6", others 12' 8".

The plates with pole rafters and ties were squared with a broad-axe. Rafters taper to the ridge and ties are halved and pinned to rafters as shown on drawings, spaced 3 to 4 feet on centers.

Written, April 26, 1934, by

*Myron S. Teller*

Myron S. Teller,  
280 Wall Street,  
Kingston. N.Y.

Approved: *Wm. Davey Foster*